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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: NASRALLAH EXTENDS HAND FOR PARTNERSHIP, BUT
REMAINS FIRM ON WEAPONS

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SUMMARY

¶1. (U) During a ceremony held in the Beirut southern suburbs to mark the eighth anniversary of the 2000 Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Hizballah SYG Nasrallah delivered a televised speech in which he extended to the GOL the hand for partnership and cooperation, but at the same time justified the possession of the resistance's weapons. He announced a new "liberation strategy" for the Shebaa Farms and Kfarshouba hills in addition to the "national defensive strategy" cited by President Sleiman in his inaugural address. With no further elaboration, Nasrallah promised that Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails will return to Lebanon soon. He welcomed the election of Michel Sleiman as president and promised a "quiet and calm" summer in Lebanon. End summary.

NASRALLAH ANNOUNCES LIBERATION
STRATEGY, CALLS FOR PARTNERSHIP

¶2. (U) On May 26, at a Liberation Day ceremony marking the eighth anniversary of the 2000 Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Hizballah SYG Nasrallah delivered a televised speech in front of a large crowd in Beirut's southern suburbs. In his speech, Nasrallah said the resistance does not have to wait for a national or popular consensus, but rather that it should carry weapons and proceed to fulfill its liberation duties. He added, "We should not use the resistance's weapons for any internal political gain" and warned the government and army not to use its weapons against an opposition political party, such as Hizballah.

¶3. (U) Nasrallah added a new condition to justify Hezbollah's weapons when he called for the formulation of a new "liberation strategy" for the Shebaa Farms and Kfarshouba hills, in addition to the need for the arms as part of a "national defensive strategy." Nasrallah also called for a true national partnership and urged others to benefit from the thinking of late Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, who was capable of incorporating Hezbollah's weapons into a national reconstruction plan following the end of the civil war.

NASRALLAH WELCOMES
SLEIMAN'S ELECTION

¶4. (U) Nasrallah also welcomed the election of Michel Sleiman as president, which he said brings new hope for Lebanon. He praised Sleiman's speech for its consensual spirit, saying, "This is what Lebanon needs: consensus, partnership, and cooperation."

NATIONAL UNITY CABINET
WILL NOT BE LIMITED TO
USUAL OPPOSITION PARTIES

15. (SBU) Nasrallah further added that a national unity cabinet should be formed based on true representation; this formation will be a success for all of Lebanon and not one party over the other. He noted that the opposition's share will not be limited to Hizballah, Amal, and Aoun's Change and Reform bloc, but will also include other opposition parties. March Druze MP Akram Shuhayyeb told Polstaff on May that he believed the opposition would nominate members of the Syrian Baath party and Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP). He said MP Saad Hariri should not accept the premiership if he will be surrounded by cabinet members from the opposition Syrian parties.

HIZBALLAH DEMANDS
COEXISTENCE

16. (U) Nasrallah clarified that Hizballah neither asked for a change in the political structure of the state nor an amendment to the Taif Agreement despite that all victorious resistance efforts in the world either took control of power or demanded to have power. He added, "Hizballah does not want power in Lebanon, nor to control Lebanon, nor to rule Lebanon, nor to impose our project and thoughts on the Lebanese people, because we believe Lebanon is a special and pluralistic state. The existence of this country only comes about through coexistence, and this is what we are demanding." He repeated, however, that he is proud to be a member of the "Wilayat el-Faqih," (Islamic-dominated state), and Hizballah is its party.

RETURN OF LEBANESE
PRISONERS FROM ISRAELI
JAILS

17. (U) In his speech, Nasrallah disclosed that a major breakthrough on the issue of Lebanese prisoners held in Israeli jails will be achieved. He said, "Samir Qantar (the longest held Lebanese

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prisoner) and others will soon be in Lebanon." He did not elaborate on this issue.

QUIET AND CALM SUMMER
FOR LEBANON

18. (U) Concluding his speech, Nasrallah promised to exert all efforts to have a quiet and calm summer, in contrast to the hot summer the USG and its "Pharaoh," President Bush, allegedly had promised for Lebanon. He added that there are two dreams; a Lebanese dream and a U.S. dream, "so let us fulfill the Lebanese dream of a quiet and calm summer and not the U.S. dream of a hot summer."

CELEBRATORY SHOTS
CAUSE INJURIES

19. (U) Following Nasrallah's speech, more than ten people were injured as a result of celebratory shooting and provocative actions in Beirut by Amal and Hizballah supporters. The army intervened and contained the situation.

COMMENT

110. (U) By calling for a national strategy to liberate Shebaa Farms and Kfarshouba, Hizballah is seeking yet another justification for retaining its arms. It suggests that Hizballah will maintain its self-assigned role as Lebanon's first line of defense, while leaving political and economic issues in the hands of the government. While the speech otherwise differed little in tone or substance from previous speeches, the timing was not appreciated by many Lebanese, still celebrating the May 25 election of President Michel Sleiman, who had hoped for a more conciliatory tone. Nasrallah's fiery

speech and aggressive body language, along with skirmishes between Hariri's Future Movement and Amal in Beirut following the speech, instead seem to indicate that the honeymoon will be short-lived.
End comment.

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